

[Mrs. Dorothy Cleve Norton]

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Dup 2nd Elk - Chaves Co.

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INTERVIEW

[MRS. DOROTHY CLEVE NORTON, GRANDDAUGHTER?]

OF GEORGE HENDRIX a PIONEER SETTLER

OF ELK

Georgia B. Redfield 832 words

The Community settlement “ Elk ” derived its name from large herds of elk found, during the early days of its settlement, in Elk Canyon, which runs northwest through the farms and ranching lands of that district.

There are four hundred and seventy-five people in the Elk community.

With an altitude of 5,350 feet , Elk is located in a beautiful part of New Mexico, eighty-five miles southwest of Roswell, on the upper Penasco River in the southwestern part of Chaves County on U. S. Highway 83. Cl8 - 6/5/41 - N. Mex.

While Elk does not have a railroad or train service, there is a daily bus transportation service connecting Artesia east and Cloudcroft west. The Southern Pacific Railroad given transportation service, from Cloudcroft (thirty-one miles) with connections at Alamogordo.

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There is a school bus for transportation of children from the ranching and farming districts, to the Elk school.

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Splendid ranch-house accommodations may be had for regular boarders, or tourists on the Cleve ranch. The rates are from \$2.50 up. Arrangements may be made for tours (horseback or cars) to the many points of interest in the Elk districts. There are no tourist camps.

The winters are mild and summers are delightfully cool. The average temperature for January, is 39.4, minimum 23.8, maximum 55.1

The early-day settlement of the Elk community and the establishment of the first ranches in that location is of unusual historical interest, as given by Mrs. Dorothy Cleve Norton, Granddaughter of George Hendrix, and daughter of Bernard Cleve pioneer settlers of the Elk community.

"George Hendrix, his wife Sarah Elizabeth Hendrix and seven of their eight children arrived in the Elk Canyon country in December, 1887. They had started on their journey to New Mexico, from Johnson City, Texas, September 12th 1887. There were four other families (twenty-five people altogether) in the caravan. There were five covered wagons, one (the chuck wagon) was drawn by oxen.

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The wagons were followed by about five hundred head of stock and thirty-five horses.

"The country was suffering from a severe drouth season during the months of their traveling across the plains. Very little water was found on the long hard drives between their camping places. The caravan people as well as the stock suffered acutely from alkali water, which was boiled and used for coffee. The starved cattle became poor and weak, some gave out entirely and were lost.

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"The stock and caravan were held up at the state line on the Black River for cattle inspection.

"Travel worn, exhausted and hungry the caravan arrived at Hope, December 23rd 1887. They made camp just below "Y C Crossing" near a rock house.

"There was a four foot snow covering the camp ground, the next morning the 24th which caused suffering, and the disbanding of the caravan

"What remained of the five hundred head of stock had drifted away, in the wind and snow; only four remained. Some were dead on the camp grounds.

"The Hendrix family was taken into the shelter of a dirt-roofed homestead house of John Paul, who was the first 4 man who settled in the town of Hope.

"George Hendrix never fully recovered from the hardships endured on the journey, and from a blow on the head with a walnut limb given by a companion, when asked by Mr. Hendrix to pay his part of the expenses of the caravan. His state of health caused the girls, as well as the boys, of the family, to labor in the fields, as few pioneers are ever compelled to labor.

"They improved and cultivated a rented place on the Penasco River, which was owned by the C A Bar Cattle Company. This place was afterwards owned by Angie Hendrix Cleve and her husband Bernard Cleve, to whom she was married April 22nd 1894. They were married in the home of her sister who had previously married T. C. Tillotson of Elk.

"Bernard Cleve, owned in partnership with a cousin, J. F. Hinkle, the Elk store and some cattle. In 1887 Mr. Cleve bought out Mr. Hinkle's interests and built the home on the Cleve estate, where Mrs. Cleve lives at present, and where the five children, Katherine, Bernard, Jr., Dorothy (Mrs. M. L. Norton), Marjorie and Oris were born.

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"Bernard Cleve was born February 8th, 1863, on a farm 5 two miles west of Washington, Missouri.

"He came to New Mexico and settled on the Penasco River at Elk in 1885, where he worked as a cow-boy and later a stock-man, postmaster and merchant, owning the Elk store and one at Cloudcroft. He was prominent as a community builder and political organizer. Mr. Cleve died March 26th 1913."

At the time of the establishment of the postoffice at Elk in 1885 mail was brought in once a week. It is now delivered dally. Mrs. Cleve is postmistress and owner of the store in which the postoffice is established.

Sheep and stock raising, farming and lumber are the chief industries of Elk. There is one store and a sawmill.

The Elk country is rich in undeveloped archaeological sites. Mrs. Cleve has found numerous valuable specimens of pottery on her estate. Most interesting among these is a pottery bowl (unbroken) with burned food (apparently beans) in the bottom.

These archaeological sites, the old homes of the first settlers - George Hendrix, vJ. F. Hinkle and the 6 Bernard Cleve families, the trees and springs and the Apache Indian chuck wagon meals served seven miles from Spur Ranch, are some of the many points or interest to be found in the Elk Canyon districts surrounded by the Sacramento Mountains.

Big game hunting in the mountains, where game is plentiful, is enjoyed by the people of Elk.

There is a good school, with one teacher and thirty pupils.

A splendid cattle country, delightful climate and ideally located, Elk has much to offer in colorful history, scenery, and romance.

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As given in an interview by Mrs. Dorothy Cleve Norton.

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